

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



Cora Campbell, Commissioner

Jeff Regnart, Director



Contact: Wayne Donaldson
Division of Commercial Fisheries
Phone: (907) 486-1840
Fax: (907) 486-1824

Westward Region
211 Mission Road
Kodiak AK, 99615

December 31, 2012

2013 PARALLEL GROUNDFISH FISHERIES MANAGEMENT IN KODIAK, CHIGNIK, SOUTH ALASKA PENINSULA, BERING SEA-ALEUTIAN ISLANDS AND CHUKCHI-BEAUFORT AREAS

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) has issued an emergency order authorizing parallel groundfish fisheries in state waters of the Kodiak, Chignik, South Alaska Peninsula, and Bering Sea-Aleutian Islands areas during 2013. The Chukchi-Beaufort Area will remain closed to groundfish fishing in 2013. Groundfish fisheries that are not actively managed by the State of Alaska will open utilizing fishing seasons, bycatch limits, area closures, and allowable gear types from federal fishery management measures in adjacent waters of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

Beginning January 1, 2013, National Marine Fisheries Service will implement a new fisheries observer program for Alaska's federal commercial groundfish and halibut fisheries. The new Observer Program will change how observers are deployed, how observer coverage is funded, and modifies the pool of vessels and processors that must have some or all of their operations observed. Vessel operators participating in directed halibut, state-waters parallel, and guideline harvest level (GHL) groundfish fisheries are encouraged to become familiar with how they may be affected by this new federal program. Information and frequently asked questions on the restructured observer program are available on the National Marine Fisheries Service website at: <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/sustainablefisheries/observers/> or by contacting the Observer Program office in Seattle at: (206) 526-4195 or (206) 526-4194.

Parallel groundfish fishery rules may be modified from those published in the federal register by subsequent emergency order to ensure resource conservation or management consistent with the interest of the economy and general well being of the State of Alaska. Fishermen should be aware of state regulatory exceptions to federal fishery rules, where state regulations apply to parallel fisheries rather than federal fishery regulation.

-continued-

Federal sector allocations in the EEZ based on processing activity will not be recognized in parallel fisheries. Adjacent federal waters opened to a gear type, whether to both catcher-processor vessels and catcher vessels, or only one of those, will be considered open in state waters to both catcher vessels and catcher-processor vessels until closed to all vessels using the designated gear type.

The State of Alaska has adopted Steller sea lion protection measures under authority of 5 AAC 28.087 *Management Measures in Parallel Groundfish Fisheries for Protection of Steller Sea Lions*. Waters of Alaska that are described in federal regulations implementing Steller sea lion protection measures as closed to fishing or closed to gear types are so closed to all vessels, regardless of whether the vessel does or does not have a federal fishing permit.

Except as noted below, federal regulations implementing Steller sea lion protection measures for Pacific cod, Atka mackerel and walleye pollock are located in 50 CFR 679.22 and in Tables 4, 5, 6 and 12 of 50 CFR 679 posted on the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) web site at <http://www.alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/regs/default.htm> or available from NMFS offices in Alaska. Fishermen, except those using mechanical jigging machines or hand troll gear operators, are required to adhere to vessel monitoring system requirements while fishing for walleye pollock, Pacific cod and Atka mackerel.

In the Kodiak Area, the Steller sea lion haul out at Cape Barnabas shall be open to pot and mechanical jigging machine gear. In the South Alaska Peninsula Area, the Steller sea lion haul out at Caton Island shall be open to pot and mechanical jigging machine gear.

In the Aleutian Islands parallel Pacific cod fishery between 175° W long. to 178° W long. the State of Alaska has adopted federal regulations implementing Steller sea lion protection measures located in Table 5 to 50 CFR Part 679 (69 FR 75865, December 20, 2004) posted on the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) web site <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/frules/fr75865.pdf> or available from NMFS offices in Alaska. Vessels in the parallel Pacific cod fishery operating between 175° W long. to 178° W long. are restricted to 60 feet or less for trawl, pot, mechanical jigging machine gear, and hand troll; however, vessels using longline gear may not exceed 58 feet overall length.

The State of Alaska has adopted, under 5 AAC 28.055 *Seabird Avoidance Measures in Groundfish Fisheries*. Federal seabird avoidance regulations described in 50 C.F.R. 679.24 (revised as of April 27, 2009) are applicable in state waters for longline vessels greater than 26 feet. The federal seabird avoidance regulations are posted on the NMFS web site at <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/protectedresources/seabirds/guide.htm>

Commercial fishing gear is prohibited in certain areas to protect essential fish habitat (EFH). State waters surrounding specific EFH areas are closed by 5 AAC 39.167 *Commercial Fishing Gear Prohibited in Waters of Alaska Surrounding Essential Fish Habitat Areas*. EFH areas are described in federal regulation at 50 C.F.R. 679.22 (revised as of April 25, 2008).

-continued-

Participants in parallel groundfish fisheries that purchase or process raw groundfish should be aware of electronic reporting and recordkeeping requirements in 5 AAC 39.130 (h) that comply with federal electronic reporting and recordkeeping requirements in 50 CFR 679.5 (revised as of December 31, 2008).

The groundfish fisheries in 1–5 below are not managed under parallel regulations. Parallel rules are not adopted because these fisheries are actively managed by ADF&G.

1. The lingcod *Ophiodon elongates* fishery;
2. The black rockfish *Sebastes melanops* fishery in the Kodiak, Chignik, and South Alaska Peninsula areas, and state waters of the Bering Sea-Aleutian Islands Area;
3. The dark rockfish *Sebastes ciliatus* fishery in the Kodiak, Chignik, and South Alaska Peninsula areas, and the Bering Sea-Aleutian Islands Area;
4. The state-waters Pacific cod *Gadus macrocephalus* seasons in the Kodiak, Chignik, and South Alaska Peninsula areas, and the Aleutian Islands District of the Bering Sea–Aleutian Islands Area;
5. The state-waters sablefish *Anoplopoma fimbria* fishery.

-end-